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United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service

Fishery Leaflet 161

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PACIFIC OCEANIC FISHERY
INVESTIGATIONS

Chicago, Ill. * December 1945

RIDDING PONDS OF TURTLES

Prepared in the Division of Fishery Biology

It is not probable that turtles and terrapin could be permanently eliminated from a pond or lake, but the numbers could be kept under control by continued capture. If it were possible to drain the pond, the entire bottom might be raked over and the turtles destroyed or marketed. As the demand for turtles is very light in summer, however, the best time for marketing them is during the winter.

Where possible to do so, the most effective way of removing turtles from a pond or lake is to draw off the water and collect them in hand nets. If this is not practicable a log or plank may be placed in the water so inclined that its upper end projects about a foot above the surface, while the lower end is fixed beneath the surface by attachment to a stump or to a pair of stakes, or by being driven into the bank. Stretch a net around the part of the log that is out of the water, adjusting it to form a pocket under the projecting end of the log. If properly placed, turtles of some kinds will crawl out on the exposed part of the log to bask in the sun. When a man approaches, the turtles will drop off into the net and can be easily captured. Snappers are not likely to be taken in that way, and turtles, with the exception of the snappers, are not considered destructive of fish life. The snappers can sometimes be captured by hook and line, baiting it with a piece of fish and secreting it in the weeds where fish are less likely to find it.

It is from their hibernating places that the greater number of snappers found on the market are taken, and the captors are usually fishermen or trappers. The methods of capture employed for the various forms of winter quarters- whether muskrat holes, old logs, or springy places- are all, so far as could be learned, very much the same. The implement used is a stout hook, made by bending an iron rod at one end, sharpening the short or hook end, and leaving the other as it is or driving it into a wooden handle to make it better to manipulate during very cold weather. If there is much ice, it is cut and the hook probed or prodded about until a turtle, which feels much like a chunk of wood, is encountered. It is then pulled out by the hook. It is somewhat difficult to land large turtles, although they are benumbed and offer little resistance. The turtle catchers rely upon their hunting instinct to discover the turtles, and when a good place is found many can be taken from it.

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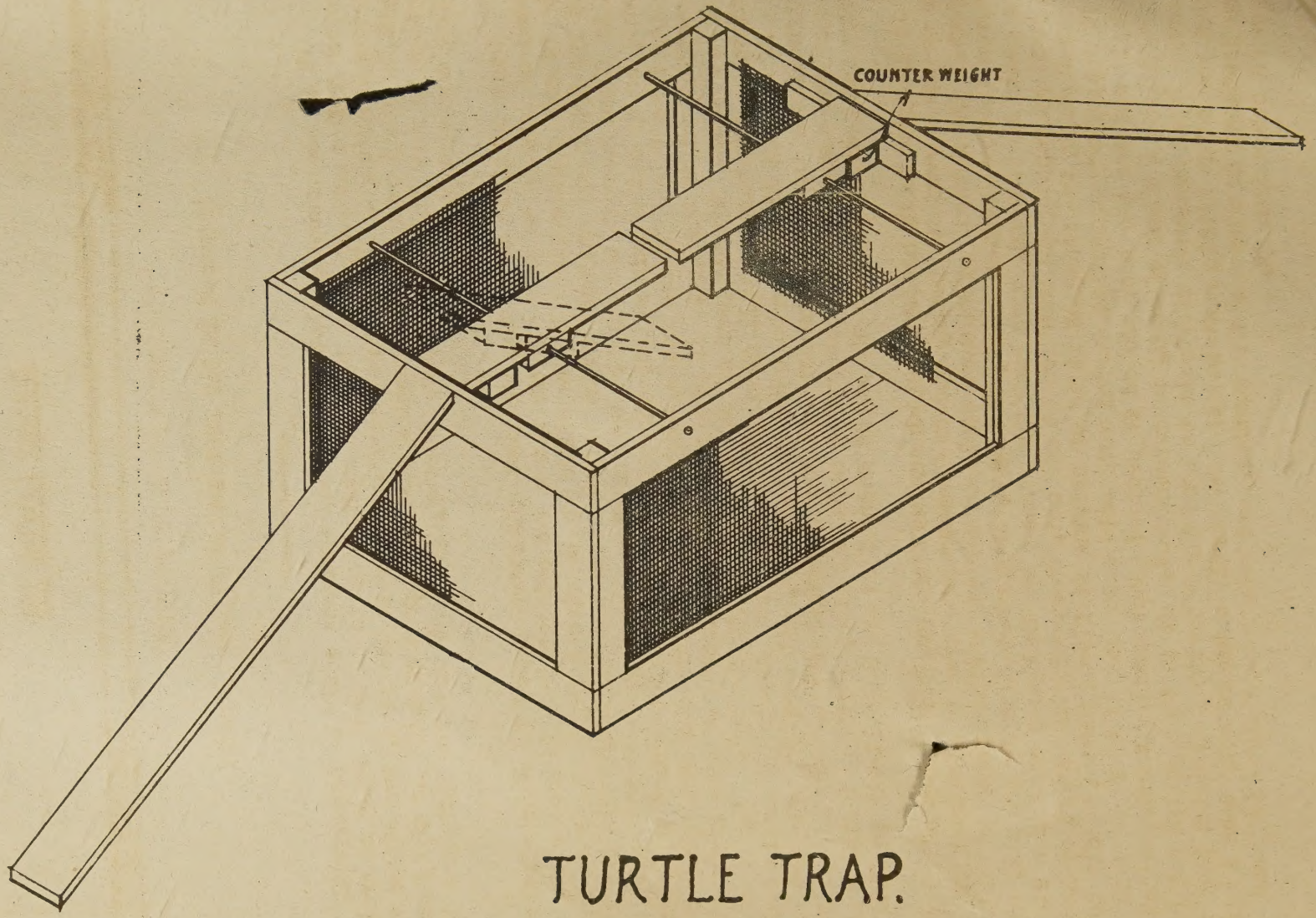

TURTLE TRAP.

SIZE - USUALLY - 2 x2 x4

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